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General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

49th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 7 November 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 103 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President: The General Assembly will resume its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 103 on the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2006.

As members will recall, when the 44th plenary meeting was adjourned on Tuesday morning, 31 October 2006, there still remained one seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States to be filled.

Before proceeding further, I would like to inform members that I have received a letter dated 3 November 2006 from the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States informing the Assembly that, after the withdrawal of Guatemala and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as candidates to the Security Council for the period 2007-2008, the Group has endorsed the candidature of Panama.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the next round of balloting by secret ballot.

This forty-eighth round of balloting, will, in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure, also be the twenty-third unrestricted ballot.

For this forty-eighth round of balloting, may I remind the Assembly that any Member State from among the Latin American and Caribbean States may be a candidate except those outgoing members and those already members of the Security Council, namely Argentina and Peru.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all the ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "B" for the Latin American and Caribbean States the name of the one State for which they wish to vote.

Ballot papers marked "B" will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State as well as if they contain the name of a Member State which does not belong to that region.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Ms. Cerere (Kenya), Mr. Riedzal (Malaysia), Ms. Klausa (Poland) and Mr. Flueck (Switzerland) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 10.40 a.m.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	189
Abstentions:	9
Required two-thirds majority:	120
Number of votes obtained:	
Panama	164
Venezuela	11
Guatemala	4
Barbados	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority and the largest number of votes, Panama is elected a member of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning 1 January 2007.

The following five States have thus been elected members of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning 1 January 2007: Belgium, Indonesia, Italy, Panama and South Africa.

The President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Security Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

I am delighted that the General Assembly has just elected Panama, starting from 1 January 2007, as the second non-permanent member of the Security Council from among the Latin American and Caribbean Group of States.

On this occasion, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Panama on its election and wish it every success in the discharge of this important mandate.

Allow me also to commend the Latin American and Caribbean Group of States for the spirit of compromise and solidarity they have shown throughout this process.

In this context, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to both Guatemala and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for their joint decision to work closely with other members of the Group in order to reach consensus on a compromise candidate. I also wish to thank both countries for their courteous manner and the exemplary cooperation extended to my office and to me personally.

I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Skinner-Klee (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, thank you for allowing me to take the floor on this occasion.

My delegation wishes to use this opportunity to reiterate its gratitude to your Government in particular and to each of the 116 countries that have supported us at this time in our aspiration to fill the non-permanent member vacancy traditionally filled by a member of the Latin American and Caribbean Group in the Security Council during the 2007-2008 biennium. Our special recognition goes to our Mesoamerican partners, the countries of Central America, Colombia and Mexico.

We also wish to thank all the members of the General Assembly for their patience, as well as for the respect shown through this electoral process that concludes today.

To the Government and people of Panama, we extend our heartfelt congratulations for their selection by the Latin American and Caribbean Group, on the initiative of Guatemala and Venezuela, to be proposed to the General Assembly as the consensus candidate to represent our region in the Security Council during the 2007-2008 biennium. We feel well-represented by Panama, a brotherly country and member of the Central American Integration System.

Although we regret the polarization of the campaign by reasons that had nothing to do with our own conduct, we are proud of the fact that Guatemala could carry out a systematic and professional campaign, well planned, and, above all, with dignity, respect and collegiality, that was worthy of the endorsement of as many as 116 of the countries Members of this Organization.

At all times, Guatemala has defended the principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nations Charter, especially with regard to the friendly relations among States, equitable geographical rotation and participation of small States in the various United Nations bodies.

Guatemala has waited for the opportunity to participate in the Security Council for more than 60 years. We have more than sufficient merit to serve on that body, and this is why my Government has duly presented to our regional Group its candidacy for the vacancy that will come up for the 2012-2013 biennium. It is our hope that on that occasion the countries of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States will give us their support.

Mr. Arias Cárdenas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, and on behalf of our people, we would like to thank all United Nations representatives. We would like to thank you, Madam President, and the General Assembly for its support and understanding.

We made a proposal — a very frank proposal of our own — to provide the Security Council with a balanced and independent voice. The election was quite unique; it was more than a campaign between two brotherly countries within one region where there was no consensus. Various statements were made in this very Hall. Afterwards, the Ambassador of the United States claimed that this had been a triumph for his country, for the United States, and that it had achieved its objective, namely to ensure that a developing country such as ours did not achieve a seat on the Security Council.

We could deny this or draw other conclusions from this, but we would prefer not to do so. We would prefer to say that we would not like to speak of defeat or the defeated. But there must be lessons learned from these 46 rounds of balloting in the General Assembly. For the big countries, it should be clear that they cannot impose their will and that the Assembly will not accept imposition, because it exercises its freedom in democracy. We should also remember that some embraces end up by killing you, like a bear hug; and everyone should remember the strength and power of the General Assembly.

Finally, we must learn the strength of dialogue. In looking at the proposal that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) has put forward to the General Assembly — the proposal of Panama — which is a bridge between Central America and South America — a country that was part of the great liberator Simon Bolívar's big homeland, Greater Colombia, we hope that country will move forward, be independent, impartial and balanced within the Security Council. Of course, as a nation with a vision, we will be prepared to support them in every way possible.

The President: That concludes our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 103.

Agenda item 103 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council

The President: The General Assembly will resume its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 103 on the election of 18 members of the Economic and Social Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2006.

Before proceeding further, I would like to remind members that, as was announced at the 46th plenary meeting, on Thursday, 2 November 2006, we shall first hold elections to fill the one remaining seat from among the Eastern European States. Thereafter, we shall proceed to a by-election to elect a member of the Council from among the Western European and other States.

The General Assembly will now proceed to the elections to fill the one remaining seat from among the Eastern European States. In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall proceed now to the next round of balloting by secret ballot. This ninth round of balloting which, in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure, will also be the fifth restricted ballot. This ninth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected in the previous ballot, namely Belarus and Bulgaria. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "C" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "C" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Belarus or Bulgaria, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lomba (Gabon), Ms. Farfán (El Salvador), Mr. Komar (Indonesia), Ms. Aperans (Latvia) and Ms. Bovi (San Marino) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m.

Mr. Penjo (Bhutan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting resumed at 11.20 a.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group C — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	192
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	1
Required two-thirds majority:	127
Number of votes obtained:	
Belarus	114
Bulgaria	76

Since no candidate obtained the required two-thirds majority in the previous ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern European States. We shall therefore proceed to the tenth round of balloting.

I give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria on a point of order.

Mr. Piperkov (Bulgaria): Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to make the following statement.

The Republic of Bulgaria submitted its candidature for membership of the United Nations Economic and Social Council guided by the will to contribute in good faith to effective partnership and cooperation among United Nations Member States in the economic and social field. My country gave ample proof of its commitment to the Economic and Social Council during its several previous terms on the Council.

At the time of the elections for new members of the Economic and Social Council held on 2 November 2006, there were clear indications of wide support among Member States for the Bulgarian candidature. However, although in the first round Bulgaria received 123 votes — five votes short of the required two-thirds majority — we have taken note of the fact that our bid to serve on the Economic and Social Council for the period 2007-2009 did not receive the support of the required majority of Member States. Acting in a spirit of goodwill and cooperation, Bulgaria has therefore decided to withdraw its candidature and to postpone it to a later time.

My country remains committed to the goals of the Economic and Social Council and stands ready to contribute in every possible way to streamlining the work of that main United Nations body.

I would like to express our deep and sincere gratitude to all the countries that have given us their unwavering support throughout the election campaign.

The Acting President: I thank the representative of Bulgaria for his cooperation.

Taking into account the statement just made by the representative of Bulgaria, we will proceed to the next restricted ballot, in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure. This round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected in the previous ballot, namely, Belarus and Bulgaria. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been counted.

Ballot papers marked "C" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "C" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Belarus or Bulgaria, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lomba (Gabon), Ms. Farfán (El Salvador), Mr. Komar (Indonesia), Ms. Aperans (Latvia) and Ms. Bovi (San Marino) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group C — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	190
Abstentions:	22
Required two-thirds majority:	112
Number of votes obtained:	
Belarus	156
Bulgaria	12

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Belarus was elected a member of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning 1 January 2007.

The Acting President: Having obtained the required two-thirds majority of members present and voting, the following 18 States have thus been elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2007: Algeria, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, Canada, Cape Verde, El Salvador, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Malawi, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Romania, Somalia, the Sudan and the United States of America.

I congratulate those States which have been elected members of the Economic and Social Council.

As was announced earlier this morning, the Assembly will now proceed to a by-election to elect a member of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with rule 140 of the rules of procedure.

In that connection, I should like to draw the attention of members to document A/61/557, containing a letter dated 2 November 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations. In his letter, the Permanent Representative of Australia announces that Australia would like to relinquish its seat on the Economic and Social Council for its remaining term in favour of New Zealand.

As a result, a vacancy will occur and a new member must therefore be elected to fill the unexpired term of office of Australia, commencing 1 January 2007 and expiring on 31 December 2007.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, and taking into account that the vacancy will occur from among the Western European and other States, the new member should therefore be elected from that region.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the candidate which receives a two-thirds majority of members present and voting will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot, there shall be no nominations, and we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

I should like to inform members that, as of 1 January 2007, the following States from the Group of Western European and other States will be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The names of those 12 States should therefore not appear on the ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all the ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the name of the one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers will be declared invalid if they contain the name of more than one State as well as if they contain the name of a Member State which does not belong to that region.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Farfán (El Salvador), Mr. Lomba (Gabon), Mr. Komar (Indonesia), Ms. Aperans (Latvia) and Ms. Bovi (San Marino) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12 noon and resumed at 12.15 p.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group E — Western European and other States

Number of ballot papers:	186
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	185
Abstentions:	8
Required two-thirds majority:	118
Number of votes obtained:	
New Zealand	176
San Marino	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, New Zealand was elected a member of the Economic and Social Council for a term of office beginning 1 January 2007 and ending on 31 December 2007.

The Acting President: I congratulate New Zealand, which has been elected a member of the Economic and Social Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 103.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.